

Inspection of Parkside House School

Station Road, Backworth, North Tyneside, Tyne and Wear NE27 0AB

Inspection dates: 3–5 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a good school. School leaders are clearly ambitious for pupils. They want to make sure pupils get qualifications and have experiences that will be useful to them in the future. Pupils are able to study a wide range of subjects. Pupils also get the chance to do a lot of extra activities and go on trips and visits.

The ethos of the school is about being nurturing. This is a small school where pupils can always find someone to talk to if they are worried about anything. Staff are friendly and approachable. Pupils work in small groups and get to know each other well. Pupils feel safe at this school and bullying is rare. Pupils attend well and start their lessons promptly. Teachers build good relationships with pupils and show them how important learning can be.

School leaders think carefully about how to provide for pupils' individual needs. Pupils who come to Parkside House School have often struggled to manage in their previous school for all sorts of reasons. This may have meant that they stopped attending or had difficulties settling to their work. The staff at this school get to know their pupils quickly and have high expectations of them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum offer is broad and well-organised. Teachers plan work that is sequenced in a way that helps pupils build up subject skills and knowledge steadily. In history, for example, pupils learn subject skills lower down the school that are applied topic by topic through the GCSE course. Pupils can make links between subjects. For example, when learning about states of matter in science, pupils spoke about the work on volcanoes they had done in geography.

School leaders have added vocational programmes to the curriculum. This helps pupils link subject knowledge to future employment. For example, pupils can study animal care and horticulture at school. School leaders have already identified a need to add in an applied sports course as this is not available at present.

Teachers are all subject specialists. Teachers show pupils how much they like their subject and why they find it interesting. The passion that teachers show for their subject comes across in their lessons.

Teachers think about how best to support the emotional needs of their pupils. For example, teachers often begin lessons with a calming activity. Teachers encourage a lot of discussion in class and take time explaining things to pupils. The additional adults in classrooms help with this as well. However, some staff are less clear about how to support pupils who have difficulties with their writing.

All teachers use questions well. This helps them check what pupils are learning in their lessons. However, when it comes to giving advice to pupils on how to improve their written work, the feedback from some teachers is not as clear as it could be.

Where it is used well, pupils are clear about how they can improve their written work. However, this is not the case in all subjects.

School leaders promote reading across the school. There is a small library, and there are book boxes in all classrooms. Most pupils are confident readers, and there is specialist intervention for pupils who need to improve their reading.

The pupils at the school may have had poor attendance at their previous school. However, staff work hard to reduce pupils' anxiety, and pupils' attendance improves once they are settled at Parkside House School.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education or training. Pupils have an independent careers adviser, and all pupils who left the school recently went into some form of further education or training. Some pupils do work-related learning outside of school, alongside their academic qualifications, for example motor mechanics and computer maintenance.

There is a rich and varied enrichment programme for pupils. This includes events in school as well as visits. Recently pupils had visited Durham Cathedral and the National Museum for Children's Books. The whole staff get involved with the school events. For example, during the inspection we saw how happy pupils were with what was happening at breaktime during World Book Day. Staff also run a range of clubs for pupils outside of the school day. There is a student council where they debate issues and come up with ideas about how to improve the school.

Staff morale is high. A large number of the teachers responded to the Ofsted staff questionnaire. They all said that they are proud to work in this school. Teachers say they are well supported and have access to a wide range of training.

The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. The proprietor is committed to supporting pupils who have not managed in a mainstream setting. School leaders and the wider staff team share this vision.

The governing body has a wide range of skills and experience. The governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. For example, they are aware of the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and are proud of how this is implemented at Parkside House School. The headteacher keeps the governors well-informed about school life and how well pupils are doing. This helps the governors make decisions about how to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has put the school's safeguarding policy on the school's website. This information is easy to reach and is compliant with current, statutory guidance.

The proprietor provides training in child protection for everyone who works at the school. There are positive relationships between school staff and pupils. This helps pupils feel they can talk to staff about any worries they have.

The headteacher ensures that pupil admissions and attendance registers are correctly completed. She provides risk assessments to ensure that staff know how to reduce any risks to the well-being of pupils. Staff know what the school's health and safety procedures are and how to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The headteacher has improved the amount of information collected about pupils and how well they are doing. However, there are still gaps in how clearly the literacy needs of some pupils are identified and explained to teachers. This limits what teachers can plan for in terms of intervention strategies, especially for those pupils who need to improve their writing skills. School leaders need to review the initial assessment information they provide to teachers about the literacy needs of pupils, to ensure that all teachers have the information they need to plan for those pupils who have difficulties with writing.
- School leaders provide high-quality training for staff in pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. All staff across the school are confident in this area of the school's provision for pupils' individual needs. However, some teachers and support staff do not know as much about how to develop pupils' extended writing. As a result, in some subjects, pupils' extended writing skills are underdeveloped. School leaders need to ensure that all staff know how to support pupils' extended writing skills.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	135001
DfE registration number	392/6011
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10126469
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Joe Thompson
Chair	Ken Thompson
Headteacher	Belinda Young
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,323–£34,904
Telephone number	0191 216 1051
Website	www.parksidehouseschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@parksidehouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–28 June 2018

Information about this school

- Parkside House School is a special school for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It is located in converted farm buildings on the outskirts of Backworth, North Tyneside.
- The school is registered for 35 pupils aged 10 to 19 years. There are currently 33 pupils on the roll, including one who is currently attending part-time, temporarily, because they are new to the school.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.

- The school website confirms the school's aims, to 'provide a high-quality education package to pupils who have difficulty in relating to education or others within a mainstream setting'.
- The school uses Northumbria Youth Action and Resources North East PC Doctor as alternative education providers. Both these alternative providers operate as sub-contractors for the UK charity Barnados.
- The school opened in April 2005, following the closure of its predecessor school in 2005.
- The school's last standard inspection was in March 2018, when it was judged to require improvement. At that time, not all the independent school standards were met. At an additional inspection in October 2019, the unmet standards were judged to be met.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Two inspectors were allocated to this inspection.
- We held meetings with the proprietor, chair of governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- We undertook a tour of the school and visited all classrooms and social areas. We checked the school buildings and grounds against the independent school standards.
- We did deep dives into English, mathematics, science and history. The deep dive for each subject included a meeting with the subject leader and a review of subject documents and plans. The deep dive also involved lesson visits, meetings with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- We visited lessons of all the other subjects taught at the school.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at the start of the school day, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- We scrutinised school documents, policies and the arrangements to safeguard pupils. This included checking the school's safeguarding systems and the single central record, meeting with the designated lead for safeguarding and speaking with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- We had meetings with a range of governors and staff.

- We had contact with parents through written comments sent in during the course of the inspection.
- We sought the views of local authorities who commissioned places at the school.
- We made a visit and had telephone contact with members of staff at the local alternative providers that had pupils from the school placed with them.
- We spoke with pupils and listened to them reading.

Inspection team

Patricia Head, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gordon Watts

Ofsted Inspector

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